From:	Blandin Elizabeth - OHS on behalf of Blandin Elizabeth - OHS <ElizabethBl@ckschools.org>
To:	Prince Erin - Superintendent; Beckon Jeanne - ADMIN; Carlson Jill - ADMIN; Zapatka Jeni - ADMIN; MacKenzie Franklyn - ADMIN; Monroe Jeremy - ADMIN
Cc:	Sweet JD - Curriculum
Subject:	Halloween Activities?
Date:	Wednesday, October 7, 2020 2:40:49 PM

Erin, Jeanne, Jill, Jeremy, Jeni, and Franklyn,

As Equity TOSAs, we are starting to hear chatter from community members, church colleagues from local churches, and CKSD staff, that some local churches are going to be partnering with PTSAs to provide Halloween activities and events on elementary school grounds in the district. In some cases, we were asked if we were involved in the decision-making process on this or had known about it, and of course, our response has been "no." We are writing to ask if there is truth to this idea, and if so, we have some equity concerns.

We believe that this is an inequitable practice for these reasons:

1. There will be a number of students and families who, because of religious beliefs, do not celebrate Halloween and will not be able to participate.
2. There are going to be a number of students and families who will not feel included because of the Christian groups actively participating in the events (in the reverse, if the event was sponsored by a Wiccan group, would Christian families feel welcome?).
3. Regarding the CKSD Board Equity Policy 0030 which states "E. Welcoming School Environments: The district shall ensure that each site creates a welcoming culture and inclusive environment;" if an activity is allowed that by its nature excludes certain students and families, how is it consistent with the district policy?
4. In that spirit of inclusion, were Jehovah's Witness, Muslim, Jewish, Wiccan, Atheist groups contacted and given the opportunity to provide activities as the Christian groups have been in contact and will be allowed the opportunity?

Below are the Race Forward Equity Choice Points questions that we believe Ben Ibale introduced to the School Board Directors at their retreat last year, and we have used in Equity Team trainings. When decisions are made at the district level, is there an Equity Lens or a common guide that is being used? If so, what lens are you using? If not, why not?

In the Wiccan culture and for some Christian groups, Halloween is considered a religious holiday. And, if we cannot celebrate Easter and Christmas in schools, why is Halloween the exception? Is it because we are looking through a biased lens that puts a dominant cultural perspective ahead of an Equity-for-all perspective?

We believe that this decision, if true, is flawed and is another example of how our "Equity speak" does not match our "Equity actions." This is also becoming clear to others, as district decisions are being played out for all to see. As we are training all staff to heighten their

Awareness, Knowledge, and Skills, they are beginning to become more aware of inequities and Advocate for change, sometimes through us, as the Equity TOSAs.

Finally, a question. As people come to us with queries about district decisions, it puts us in an awkward position because most of the time, we do not know how the decisions were made. Our reaction to such queries is like our reaction in this email. In other words, if we think a district decision is opposite the goals of the Equity Initiative, we say so. The question is: what do you want us to do? Continue to send emails like this? Send people to the school board meetings for public comment? Have people contact the press? Absent an Equity Lens structure or an Equity Director, whose job is to be at the table advocating for marginalized students, families, and staff, decisions will continue to be made that confuse people who are aware of the Equity Policy and Initiative.

Thank you for your consideration.

Elizabeth Blandin and JD Sweet
Teachers on Special Assignment, Equity

Race Forward Equity Choice Points Guide

1. **Identify a Choice Point**: What is one of your points of opportunity to make or influence a decision that may affect equitable outcomes?
2. **Assess Impacts:** What are the impacts of current decisions and actions that may be unintentionally reinforcing bias, barriers or inequities?
3. **Generate Options:** What are some alternative action options that could produce different outcomes? (Try to generate several of them.)
4. **Decide Action:** Which option will generate the most leverage, momentum or gain towards advancing equity and inclusion?
5. **Change Habits:** What reminders or “equity primes” can be structured into you routine practices and protocols to make equity an ongoing priority and habit? What relationships, supports, incentives or accountability measures could help?